

Office for Foreign Affairs, September 19, 1785

OFFICE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, September 19, 1785.

The Secretary of the United States for the Department of Foreign Affairs, in Obedience to the Order of Congress of August 9, 1785, respecting the number of Consuls necessary to be appointed, and for what Foreign Ports, Reports,

THAT in his opinion it would be expedient to have consuls in Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Austrian and United Netherlands, Britain, Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, the Canaries, Madeira, and certain ports in the Mediterranean.

That a consul general to reside at Amsterdam, should be appointed for Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands.

That another should be appointed for Britain and Ireland, to reside at London.

That another will continue necessary for France, to reside at Paris.

That another should be appointed for Spain and the Canaries, to reside at Madrid.

That another should be appointed for Portugal and Madeira, &c. to reside at Lisbon; and that the Mediterranean ports should for the present be included in his consulate.

Your secretary is further of opinion, that each of the said consuls general, should be directed to nominate such and so many consuls, for ports within his district, as he may from time to time think necessary and proper, specifying the extent and limits of each consulate; that thereupon commissions be issued by Congress to such or so many of the persons, so to be by him nominated, as Congress may judge expedient; or to others whom Congress may prefer.

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That it should be in the power of the consul general to suspend for good cause, any consul within his district, to report the same to Congress, and to appoint another to supply his place, until their pleasure shall be made known to him on the subject.

Your secretary thinks that when peace with the piratical states is established, and the American trade in the Mediterranean, shall become more extensive than it now is, it will be proper to appoint at least one consul general for the Mediterranean, but that for the present, it should be annexed to Portugal, because the communication between those ports and Lisbon, is more easy and expeditious than with Madrid. The same remark will also apply to the northern powers and Germany.

As appeals should lay from consuls to the consul general, the latter should be independent and unconcerned in trade, and consequently receive an adequate salary; and although it would be better than consuls should be maintained and restrained in like manner, yet as the expence would be enormous, it will be necessary to permit them to trade, and receive no salaries.

Five consuls general appear to your secretary to be indispensable, and as the amount of their salaries cannot well be less than 5000£ sterling a year, he takes the liberty of submitting to the consideration of Congress, whether it would not be adviseable to invest their resident ministers with consular powers, and maintain consuls general in such states only, where they may be thought indispensable, but to which the United States may not judge it necessary to send a minister.

He also thinks it would be useful to consider and determine, whether consuls general and consuls should be permitted to receive any fees.

If these ideas should meet with the approbation of Congress, the difficulty of ascertaining the number of ports to which consuls ought to be sent will be removed. As that difficulty arises from the necessity of previous and accurate information respecting the extent and

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degree of our trade to those different ports, it will not be easy to avoid mistakes on that subject. But if that matter is referred to the consul general of a certain district, he cannot be much embarrassed in deciding whether a consul be necessary at this or that port within it. Indeed it appears probable to your secretary, that in the course of a few years, consuls will be necessary at ports to which there would be no use in sending any at present.

There are certainly some ports at which there should now be consuls, and they may easily be enumerated. If therefore the plan above proposed, should not be thought adviseable, your secretary, on this report's being referred back to him, will immediately proceed to enumerate them.

All which is submitted to the wisdom of Congress. **JOHN JAY.**